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Case 8642

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In The Application Of: F.N. Desai, et al.
Appl. No. : 09/909,486
Group Art Unit : 1772
Confirmation No. : 2573
Filed : July 20, 2001
Examiner : A. Chevalier

OFFICIAL

For: HIGH-ELONGATION APERTURED NONWOVEN WEB AND METHOD
FOR MAKING

REPLY AFTER FINAL OFFICE ACTION PURSUANT TO 37 CFR § 1.116

Mail Stop AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This reply is responsive to the Final Office Action of May 27, 2004, which set a three-month period for reply. Please consider the following amendments and remarks.

Amendments to the Claims begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 5 of this paper.

Appl. No. 09/909,486
Amdt. Dated July 26, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 27, 2004

AMENDMENTS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven web comprising a plurality of apertures each having a hole size greater than 2 mm^2 , and a hole aspect ratio less than 6, said nonwoven web having an open area greater than 15% and ~~being capable of exhibiting~~ at least 70% extension in the cross machine direction at a loading of 10 g/cm.
2. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 1, wherein said nonwoven web has a basis weight between 15 and 70 gsm.
3. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 1, wherein said nonwoven web has a basis weight between 40 and 50 gsm.
4. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 1 wherein said nonwoven web is a web selected from the group consisting of a bonded carded web of fibers, a web of spunbonded fibers, a web of meltblown fibers, and a multilayer material including at least one of said webs.
5. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 4 wherein said web of meltblown fibers includes meltblown microfibers.
6. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 1, wherein said nonwoven web is a topsheet on a disposable absorbent article.
7. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven web comprising a plurality of apertures formed by application of a tensioning force, said apertures coincident with a plurality of weakened, melt-stabilized locations, said apertures having a circumferential edge, a portion of said circumferential edge being defined by a remnant of said melt-stabilized locations, said nonwoven web ~~capable of exhibiting~~ extension in the cross machine direction of at least 70% at a loading of 10 g/cm.
8. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 7, wherein said nonwoven web comprises an open area greater than 15% and an average aperture size greater than 2.0 mm^2 .

Appl. No. 09/909,486
Amdt. Dated July 26, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 27, 2004

9. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 7, wherein said nonwoven web has a basis weight between 15 and 60 gsm.
10. (Original) The nonwoven web of Claim 7, wherein said nonwoven web is a topsheet on a disposable absorbent article.
11. (Withdrawn) A method for making a highly extensible apertured nonwoven web comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing a nonwoven web having a length measured in a machine direction and a first width measured in a cross machine direction;
 - b) weakening said nonwoven web at a plurality of locations to create a plurality of weakened, melt-stabilized locations;
 - c) applying a first tensioning force to said nonwoven web to cause said nonwoven web to rupture at said plurality of weakened, melt-stabilized locations creating a plurality of apertures in said nonwoven web coincident with said plurality of weakened, melt-stabilized locations, said first tensioning force causing said nonwoven web to have a second width;
 - d) incrementally stretching said nonwoven web to locally extend portions of said nonwoven web in a direction substantially parallel to said cross machine direction to a third width that is greater than the second width;
 - e) applying tension to said nonwoven web in the machine direction such that said nowoven web has a width less than said -third width.
12. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 11 wherein said nonwoven web is a web having a peak CD extensibility of at least 150%, and being selected from the group consisting of a bonded carded web of fibers, a web of spunbonded fibers, a web of meltblown fibers, and a multilayer material including at least one of said webs.
13. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 12 wherein said meltblown web includes meltblown microfibers.
14. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 11 wherein said nonwoven web comprises an elastic nonwoven web.

Appl. No. 09/909,486
Amdt. Dated July 26, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 27, 2004

15. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 11 wherein said nonwoven web comprises a nonelastic nonwoven web.
16. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 11 wherein said second tensioning step causes said nonwoven web to exhibit extension in the cross machine direction of at least 70% at 10g/cm loading.
17. (Withdrawn) A method for making a highly extensible apertured nonwoven web comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing an apertured nonwoven web having a length measured in a machine direction and a first width measured in a cross machine direction;
 - b) incrementally stretching said nonwoven web to locally extend portions of said nonwoven web in a direction substantially parallel to said cross machine direction to a second width that is greater than the first width;
 - e) applying tension to said nonwoven web in the machine direction such that said nowoven web has a width less than said second width.
18. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 17 wherein said nonwoven web is a web having a peak CD extensibility of at least 150%, and being selected from the group consisting of a bonded carded web of fibers, a web of spunbonded fibers, a web of meltblown fibers, and a multilayer material including at least one of said webs.
19. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 17 wherein said nonwoven web is a composite material comprising a mixture of fibers and one or more other materials selected from the group consisting of wood pulp, staple fibers, particulates and superabsorbent materials.
20. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 17 wherein said tensioning step causes said nonwoven web to exhibit extension in the cross machine direction of at least 70% at 10g/cm loading.